

Potatoes, Potatoes, Potatoes

Author : bluseas

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Image: *Potatoes (taken from Wikipedia)*

I had our potato harvest stored in bins of sand under the house, but I obviously wasn't prepared for -9°C weather.

The sand actually worked pretty well at protecting many of the potatoes from freezing; however, all the potatoes that were touching the sides of the bins got frozen. So, I guess it's back to the drawing board for designing a "root cellar" in a climate where any hole dug in the ground becomes a pond in the winter. Above ground storage is tricky, especially during cold spells.

So, I sorted through the potatoes, rescued the ones that were not yet frozen, and put them in the

cabin's cold room – not the best option, as I know they will sprout in there, but sprouted potatoes are better than frozen ones! Now, what to do with several pails of frozen potatoes? I knew they wouldn't keep for long, and I also knew that we wouldn't be able to eat them all before they started to rot. So, I tried drying them. I cut them into thin slices, steamed the slices so they wouldn't go brown, and then dried them in the warmer over the wood stove. I'm not sure how well they will re-hydrate, but I just couldn't stand to see so much of our crop go to waste.

As an aside to my potato issues, I have been very impressed by the Russian Blue potatoes that we grew. Even frozen, they have out-performed the Yukon Gold and Norland potatoes that we planted, in part due to their drought resistance during our long period of summer dryness. They were hardy, produced large tubers, many of which didn't actually freeze (might just have been luck) and haven't shown any signs of core rot.